



California Association of Licensed Investigators, Inc.

September 4, 2007



Office of the Secretary  
Federal Trade Commission  
600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Room H-135 (Annex K)  
Washington, DC 20580

RE: SSNs In The Private Sector – Comment, Project No. PO75414

The California Association of Licensed Investigators, a trade association of over 2000 private investigators is pleased to have the opportunity to comment on the private sector use of Social Security numbers.

Our members use the SSN for a variety of lawful purposes which serve attorneys, the courts and the public. Access to Social Security numbers and the data derived from SSN's is a critical tool for our profession. In order to demonstrate how the SSN is used, our association surveyed our members and other licensed private investigators to ask for examples of how they use this data.

I am attaching a document including many such examples to demonstrate just how important it is for our profession to retain access to this information.

If you have any questions or if I can assist further, please contact me at 510-987-8114 or write to me at my office at 510 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Suite 102, Oakland, CA 94607.

Sincerely,

Francie Koehler  
Legislation Chair

**EXAMPLES OF PRIVATE INVESTIGATORS USE OF SSNs**

**ADULT CHILDREN LOCATE FATHER'S GRAVE**

Adult children had lost track of their father years ago after their parents had separated. With use of the SS# I found that he was deceased. Using the SS# to scan additional Databases I was able to locate the gravesite. All though not the most happy ending, they were thankful for the information and were able to fly to the location to pay their respects.

RICHARD B. TESDALL ,SR.  
TESDALL & ASSOCIATES INC.

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**ASSETS RECOVERED**

A past president of NCISS was retained by the New York courts in a guardianship proceeding to recover over \$300,000 in assets stolen from a ninety-seven year-old retired Army officer by a neighbor caregiver. Through the use of credit headers he was immediately able to determine the identities and locations of the wrongdoer's relatives, properties and eventually their assets that had been taken from the victim. It was the initial header check on the suspect that uncovered a Myrtle Beach, South Carolina address for him. That information developed leads that the victim's assets had been used to purchase real property in South Carolina, expensive automobiles and increased the bank account balances of the subject under the guise that the 97-year-old victim, who was suffering from dementia, had given his life savings as gifts to the suspect. The suspect was to eventually plead guilty and was sentenced to three to nine years in state prison for second-degree grand larceny and ordered to pay \$360,000 in restitution to the estate of the victim, who died a month before sentencing of the defendant.

Bruce H. Hulme Special Investigations Inc.

**BILLION DOLLAR SETTLEMENT DISTRIBUTED FROM  
FINDING RECIPIENTS THROUGH SSNs**

Back in May 2004, a very large law firm here in Miami engaged my services to help locate 1000 gasoline dealers from 1983 to 1994. This law firm won a very large class action law suit against a large well known oil company of over one BILLION dollars and had to locate over 15,000 gas station operators during that period of time to advise them that the average pay out was somewhere in the neighborhood of \$130,000.00 apiece.

Therefore, we were retained to locate approximately 1000 dealers that were either dead or had moved. We were under an extreme deadline to locate these people by August 29, 2004, otherwise the monies would be returned to the oil company. Needless to say without the SSN's this would have been an impossible task. In a seven-week period we were able to either locate the "lost" dealers and/or their heirs. On the final week of our task we were still short some 150 people to locate. The attorneys went back into court and received an extension of time of several months to locate these additional people. It is because we were able to access the SSN's that this case is coming to a fruitful ending for all concerned. We were able to locate the heirs of the deceased and even were able to locate a number of people that had returned to their homelands, i.e.: Iran, Turkey, etc. Florida has over 300 "Jose Gonzalez" with the same date of birth. That's 300 different "Jose's." Try finding the correct one without a SSN.

**Roger P. Gibson**  
*President & Director of Investigations*

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**BIRTH MOTHER FOUND**

A young Colorado man who was a boyhood friend of my son Jim decided when he was about 30 to search for his birth mother. His adopted parents encouraged him to do it, now that he was a mature adult.

Through Adoptees in Search and other organizations, he got some leads and located his hospital records. Eventually he discovered the name of his mother and an old address for her in Los Angeles. However, she was no longer there. Because he knew that I was a legal investigator, he came to me for help.

Starting with her name and her old address, I ran databank searches that provided me with her social security number and, eventually, with a new address in Northern California. I telephoned the woman and said, "A relative is looking for you..." There was a long pause. Then she said very softly, "It must be my son."

It turned out that she never had another child. She and her husband had just retired from government jobs and moved to a small town with a lower cost of living. She told me that within the previous 12 months she had lost a dear aunt, both of her parents, and her only brother. She felt that she had no other blood relative except the child she had to give up for adoption (when unmarried) 32 years before. I assured her that I knew her boy and that he was a fine young man who had been brought up by a loving family. By this time, he was married with a family of his own. I asked her how she would like to begin contact with him and she chose an exchange of letters. Later they talked on the phone and the two of them have met on several occasions in California and Colorado. This reunion met a need for both of them.

Jane M. Cracraft, Certified Legal Investigator

**CRIMINAL CHARGES REDUCED – REAL STORY COMES OUT**

2003 highly publicized Tulare County case. My 16-year-old client charged with first-degree murder as a result of a knife fight with an 18-year-old that led to 18-year-old's death. One of the main witnesses (also a juvenile) disappeared shortly after the killing. Cops never bothered to look for him. Juvenile witness was basically homeless and had no locatable family in Tulare. But client knew where kid had lived with parents when they went to elementary school together. Using property records, I identified the name of the father. Using credit headers, I was able to establish that father was living in Adelanto, CA. (in the desert about 6 hours south of Fresno). I turned to credit headers after trying several other databases and a statewide property search with absolutely no luck.

We found the kid living with his father. Brought him back and let him talk to DA. He says our client was sitting on a couch when the adult crashed into the house and starting beating up client (client was beat to a pulp, but police reports said the beating was the result of mutual combat). Witness says client never got in one blow with his fists, but finally managed to get his pocketknife out of his pocket and stabbed other guy one time in the stomach. At this time, client was on the floor with the adult on top of him.

After he tells us this on tape, we are able to get other witnesses (who previously were afraid to come forward) to confirm his story.

DA reduces charges from 1st degree murder to voluntary manslaughter before we even go to prelim even though this is a highly publicized case (this kind of charge reduction is almost unheard-of in the Central Valley.)

(Also, it turns out the detective in the case didn't follow this or many other leads because the dead guy was the detective's daughter's boyfriend and the detective wanted first degree charges.)

Stevan Rosenlind  
Lookout Investigations Inc.

<b>EXAMPLES OF PRIVATE INVESTIGATORS USE OF SSNs</b>
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**DEAD BEAT FATHERS LOCATED**

Located a couple of "dead beat" fathers that had skipped the state on child support. With the information provided they were able to pursue the matter through legal channels. They had tried to get the D.A.'s office to find them but had no success.

RICHARD B. TESDALI, SR.  
TESDALL & ASSOCIATES INC.

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**CRIMINAL DEFENSE WITNESSES LOCATED**

As a criminal defense investigator I routinely use SSN's in the form of a credit header to locate key witnesses. It is my experience over many years that people often do not update their DL address but will almost always update their address with creditors to maintain credit. This information is updated in the header and allows me to locate them. This tool is essential in defense cases as many otherwise important witnesses would never be located. There is no other source better than the credit header.

In addition, we routinely use credit headers for process of service and pre-employment screening and on several occasions, alerted several consumers that their ID had been compromised.

Jerry Moody  
COAST GUARDIAN INVESTIGATIONS

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**CRIMINAL CLIENT EXONERATED**

Contacted by an incarcerated inmate who was pro per in his appeal for release from an 8-year term of which he had served 5 years; I used SSN's and credit headers to locate three individuals who had been instrumental in his conviction. Two of these men had been police officers, since retired, whom the DA said had brought evidence to the court including identification cards and section 8 housing papers of the victim which had been discovered in the client's car during a traffic stop.

The victim, a wheelchair bound woman, suffered an armed robbery in her home with the theft of her purse and its contents. Our client did not commit the robbery, but being a poor black man with only a Public Defender felt he was unable to reply to the weight of the legal system. The DA told him they had evidence that would convict him (provided by the two officers previously mentioned) and told him he was up for 13 years unless he pleaded guilty and would receive 8 years. Our client accepted 8 years rather than 13 and after 5 years decided to come back and fight.

The two police officers were located through credit headers and SSN's and told me they remembered the case and recalled being subpoenaed to appear with the evidence. They stated that the evidence did not exist. They appeared, but were not called because the defendant pled out to a lesser charge and no trial was conducted. The third man was an Assistant DA who is now and was at the time of this appeal institutionalized in a mental hospital. Further investigation with the Contra Costa County Housing Authority proved that the victim was not on section 8 housing and had never been registered with the housing authority for assistance.

My client was released after 5 years of an 8-year sentence for a crime that he did not commit. Our legal system, as good as it is, concentrates on convicting the accused rather than finding the truth. Private Investigators only search for the truth of the matter, regardless of how it turns out with no vested interest in anything but the truth. Please don't leave the poor and disenfranchised friendless with no possible hope of proving their innocence. The use of credit headers and SSN's is essential to the location of parties who are often the only hope of survival for those accused and innocent.

James S. van Fleet  
ABSOLUTE INVESTIGATIONS

**EXAMPLES OF PRIVATE INVESTIGATORS USE OF SSNs**

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**DEAD BEAT FATHERS FOUND**

I have on several occasions found the SSN on dead beat fathers from Marin (2) & Mendocino (1) Counties that then lead me to their present addresses so that I could serve an Order to Appear for Examination to upgrade and collect their Child Support payments

Gerry Patten  
PATTEN INVESTIGATIONS

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**DYING DISABLED VETERAN LOCATES DAUGHTER**

A disabled veteran who was dying and wanted to see his daughter he hadn't seen since she was 3 months old contacted me. The daughter is now 30 years old. I located her on the East Coast via her social security number. His daughter's mother told the father that if he went off with the Navy he would never see his daughter again. She made that promise good. He called me back after speaking with his daughter on the telephone for 3 hours. He said they both cried and talked and cried.

L. Alexander Toia, CCLA  
Alexander Toia & Company, LLC - Professional Investigations -

**CHILD ABUSED BY FOSTER FAMILY ON THE RUN LOCATED**

My firm was hired by the attorney who represented the natural parents of a severely disabled child they had to give up for adoption at birth. The family that adopted him signed an agreement with the natural parents that they could remain on the periphery of the child's life to watch him grow. After seven years of cards, letters, gifts, and limited meetings, the adoptive family disappeared. For a year a half, all attempts to reach them failed.

We tracked the husband and wife via their SSN's until their trail ended in North Carolina. Working with neighbors, clergy, relatives, and Child Protective Services, we were able to pick up a lead in a small NC town that directed us to Tennessee. I learned the family had literally fled NC in the middle of the night to avoid questioning by Child Protective Services because two foster children had reported abuse during their layover in NC. The kids, who were literally held captive, managed to escape the house.

Choice Point was the only provider that had a SSN record for the wife. The husband was an ex-military man who had a questionable history. I believe he was a drill sergeant. Had it not been for Choice Point, we would not have found them because ALL other providers didn't have updated information. The Choice Point report steered us in the right direction, which narrowed the geography to the Tennessee/Kentucky border. Had it not been for a local physician, who was concerned about the welfare of a child he examined, we may not have been able to confirm their address. I verified this was the family by the SSN the doctor had taken from the wife. The family had been moving back and forth across the border of TN/KY to conceal their whereabouts, maintaining an extremely low profile, covering their tracks. Had it not been for the SSN search that led to that area of the country and the confirmation from the physician, we would not have located them before they fled again.

The couple's attorney later told me he was processing papers to return the child to his natural parents as a result.

**L. Alexander Toia, CCLA**  
**Alexander Toia & Company, LLC - Professional Investigations -**

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**ELDER ABUSE AVERTED – EXCAPE PRISONER UNMASKED**

Cannon Street accepted an assignment some years ago from the daughters of a wealthy man in the East Bay (California) to check the background of a suspicious character who appeared to be worming his way into the family trust. Our public records checks (using a SSN) revealed the usual stuff, but only produced two years worth. Anything over two years old didn't appear. That red flag spurred us to renewed efforts resulting in his unmasking as an escaped Federal prisoner out of Washington, D.C. The U.S. Marshal's office had him cuffed in short order.

William L. Buchanan  
Vice President, Cannon Street, Inc.

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**GAS THIEVES IDENTIFIED AND ARRESTED**

Diesel Fuel Theft. A large corporation in Northern California asked us to help solve a fuel theft ring working in California and Oregon. The company credit cards were fraudently being used to access fuel from private fuel stations. We placed the private fuel service outlets under observation and were able to get the license number of the truck/tractors that were accessing the pumps and pumping the fuel. Since we do not have access to residential addresses from DMV our only other source was to identify these individuals from credit headers. We were able to acquire enough information and identify the people involved that the Sac County DA issued a grand theft warrant and they are at this time being arrested. Who benefited? Consumers of California.

Ray Smothers  
PACIFIC LEGAL INVESTIGATIONS INC.

**“EXCLUDED PARTY” IDENTIFIED – MEDICAID FRAUD**

The ability to legally access Social Security Numbers allowed me to locate a nurse who was practicing with a suspended license. She was working at a facility that receives federal funding even though she was listed as an excluded party (as a result of her having committed Medicaid fraud). As you know, as a condition of receiving Medicare, Medicaid, and other federal funding, facilities receiving federal funds are not permitted to directly or indirectly employ individuals or businesses determined to have abused federal programs in the past. These persons are listed as "excluded parties."

In some states, a Social Security Number is required to access disciplinary actions against nurses through the state licensing boards. I was able to check the status of her license in one state where she was practicing (NC) only because I had her Social Security Number.

I was trying to locate this woman because she was a defendant in a court action. Her actions or failure to act directly resulted in the death of an infant in her care. I was retained by the attorney who represented the family of the baby who died.

In this instance, the woman had an unusual name, but it was a foreign name, and she used many variations and spellings. She also had several aliases and used several birth dates. Her Social Security Number was the one constant identifier.

Carolyn J. Capparelli  
CJC Investigations

**FATHER & SON UNITED**

I was contacted by a woman who asked me if I could find the father of her 24-year-old son. She and the father had been living together for a short time in a lady's house in San Jose, she had gotten pregnant and the father had not wanted to make the commitment to stay with her and be a father. They were young, and she had her family's support. They did not stay in contact with each other. The son grew up with his grandfather as a father figure. In the last year or so, the grandfather had not been well, so the son moved in with his grandfather and grandmother to help them. Then in August, the grandfather died. So the mother decided to try to find her son's father so he would at least know his father and that's when she contacted me. She said it was a sort of birthday present for him. She said that she felt something was missing from his life and she thought that finding his father might fill a void. I explained that I would look for him, but that when I found him he would have to authorize me to reveal his location. She agreed to this. She knew very little about him, except that she did know his full name (which was a pretty common name, the scourge of investigators!), and that she had called him by his middle name. She also had an approximate age for him, but did not know his date of birth. She said his family was from San Jose, but didn't remember where they lived or what their names were. She did not know what her address had been when they lived together, and she only had the first name of the woman with whom they shared the house.

So, I ran a name search in California and got 150 hits. Some of them were repeats - but I only knew this because of the Social Security number. I was able to narrow it down using a mixture of addresses, years of birth, and Social Security number. I never would have been able to follow his trail and identify that the same person had lived at more than 11 different addresses if I hadn't been able to use the Social Security number. I was able to determine that he was living in Sacramento County because the same Social Security number and date of birth matched some addresses in San Jose. I would have had to call everyone by that name, which would have been a nuisance to them, and a very time consuming prospect. When I did speak with him, he was both nervous and excited and happy that he was going to meet his son. The first thing he wanted to know was his name and wanted me to call the mother to tell him he would call her. After I hung up with the mother and called him back, he called the mother. When I spoke with her this morning, she said that he told her that that was the biggest mistake he'd ever made, and boy, he sure was young and stupid when all that happened. They are planning a reunion the weekend after next. He will be coming down with his wife and daughter.

Lisa Wallace  
Wallace Research & Investigations

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**MONEY RECOVERED**

Most recently, I located a male subject that had not paid on his department store bill in a couple of years. The store was looking for him to serve him with a subpoena to appear in court. His last known address was in Delano, CA. The subject had changed his name and was now living in Bakersfield under a different name. He was served with the subpoena. Without his social security number, he would not have been located.

**SERRANO INVESTIGATIVE SERVICES**

Joseph M. Serrano

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**IRRESPONSIBLE CONTRACTOR LOCATED AFTER LEAVING STATE**

Located a "General Contractor" who had ran up a Hugh materials bill, in excess of \$200,000.00 using the credit lines of his Sub Contractors that he "contracted" with to provide materials and labor. The above figure does not include labor charges that were not paid. He drained the assets of this corporation. He left his rented residence and leased vehicle behind and dropped from sight. After locating his SS# and scanning public records databases, he was located in Montana. The Contractors, 3 of them, were most pleased to determine his whereabouts. Once located I contacted a PI in the area that confirmed his location.

The ability to use the SS# is a corner stone in locating people. Loss of this resource will further create a "shadow society" where those that prey on others or abandon their children and wives can find refuge from the long arm of the law.

RICHARD B. TESDALL, SR.  
TESDALL & ASSOCIATES INC.

**FORMER SUPERVISOR LOCATED FOR TO  
DEFEND WORKER COMPENSATION CASE**

My assignment was to locate a witness for a Workers Compensation Hearing, subpoena service.

I received an attorney request to locate a past supervisor due to injured worker claim. The employer had no information as to the supervisor's residence address, as this was my first phone contact to start the investigation.

My second step was to check forwarding address information at the Post Office and that search was negative for a new address for the supervisor witness.

I conducted a credit header search for the supervisors name and determined a new address for the supervisor.

The WCAB postponed the hearing. I received another request to locate the same supervisor as she had moved again by the time they attempted service of the subpoena for the delayed hearing date.

I ran a credit header search and located a new address for the supervisor. The subpoena was served and the person testified at the hearing. This testimony was crucial to defend the claim.

This is only one example of many that could be documented were other means failed to locate witness, employer out of business, co-worker witnesses, applicants that disappear during the processes of a claim.

The credit header resource is the only up to date source to locate people. Taking this resource away will have far ranging affects on the legal systems in place. This not only can affect our state but can affect the nation of states as people due move around and we frequently locate people needed in the court process in other states by searching credit header information.

**TIMOTHY WAYNE DEAN  
DEAN & DEAN INVESTIGATIONS**

**FRAUD UNCOVERED – CLIENT EXONERATED**

A young man working for a large and well-known home improvement chain was accused by store security of funneling refunds from large commercial contractors to another credit card and bank account rather than that of the contractors he was supposed to be refunding. Both the chain and the police were uncooperative in sharing any information after the young man had been accused, arrested, and charged because they were certain they had their man. The police had interviewed the woman (Desire, a stripper in San Francisco) who claimed the same young man had been her client where she served as a hostess to guests in a strip club in San Francisco. Desire stated he had spent the evening with her having dinner and dancing, including many lap dances. At the end of the evening he had told her he didn't have the money to pay her right now, but that if she would give him her account number he would deposit money in her account next week. She claimed that she complied and the following week several thousand dollars appeared in her account. She claimed this happened a number of times. She then identified the man from the police provided six-pack photo lineup.

I obtained the woman's name from prosecution reports and searching credit headers found her social security number and from that her family members, but no current address. A search for family telephone numbers followed by calls to family members asking for her to come to the phone resulted in making contact and setting an appointment to talk to Desire.

Desire, when confronted with the dubious nature of her incredible story broke down in tears and admitted that she had never met the young man. The photo lineup was shown to her again and she laughed and said she had identified two other men from the six-pack before identifying our client to the police. The first two times the police told her they wanted her to make certain she was right and left her to study the pictures before coming back to have her try again. When she identified the party they wanted they asked her to initial the third man identified and reported that she had picked our client immediately from the line up. Desire further identified the co-conspirators in the scheme who were co-workers of our client. They were angry with our client because he was hard working, popular with customers and management, and had been promoted over them rapidly. If I had been barred from access to credit headers and Social Security Numbers I would have never been able to locate the subject whom had become pregnant and left the profession. Workers in the sex industry are notoriously uncooperative in finding a co-worker. The police are notably uncooperative in assisting the defense in any case with any information that they aren't forced to provide. This young man would have suffered long term imprisonment for being too good of an employee and the conspirators would have profited \$160,000 and walked away laughing if I hadn't had access to credit headers and Social Security Numbers.

James S. van Fleet - ABSOLUTE INVESTIGATIONS

**FRAUDULENT RELATIONSHIP AVERTED**

I received an e-mail from a Law professor when she was on sabbatical in Israel. Her daughter, a professor at an Eastern University, was developing, very quickly, a serious relationship with a man she met when presenting a paper at a professional conference in Florida. The mother, my client, had reservations about this man. I was contacted with the barest of information, to see what could be found out or verified from the information the daughter had. The name was a common name, the person he was renting a room from had an even more common name, he was born in Texas, and we had his age, but not a birth date. He claimed military time, a Bachelor's degree and an advanced degree (MBA).

As I started verifying information, I established the date of birth and got the correct high school graduation date and location. At that point, the commonality of the name proved a real headache. The use of a credit header got me a SSN, and then I could look at the most important part of my assignment.

It was the SSN that verified the BA degree; it was the SSN that made it clear he did not have an advanced degree and had not attended the educational institutions he had hinted at, nor any others in the area. It was the SSN that verified some years in ROTC and later military service. It was also the SSN that verified he was on probation in Florida for an attempted burglary and assault. It was the SSN that verified a Chapter 7 Bankruptcy in Florida, a civil judgment and a foreclosure.

Needless to say, with this much information, my client's daughter had enough information to cut off the relationship. The man was trying to arrange a visit to California where the daughter was going to be on an extended vacation (which would have violated his parole, and the record showed he already had one violation noted) and the excuse he gave for not seeing her off when she left Florida was exposed as a lie, since that date was in the criminal file as a hearing date pertaining to his felony.

Becoming more romantically involved with this man would have been not only disastrous for her personal life; it could have touched her professional reputation. Both mother and daughter have reiterated over the years (the case was in 1997) how important it was to their lives that they sought the information and that I was able to provide it.

**BARBARA R. BURR, CPI - INTELLE QUEST**

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**LAW SUIT SETTLED**

Reyes vs Andiamos Restaurant. This is a large case that just settled this morning. It entailed a shooting that occurred in the parking lot of this prominent restaurant in Sacramento two years ago. Entertainers were performing Salsa that night. A Latino fight ensued and Reyes was shot and expired. Plaintiffs were asking a substantial sum to settle. We started working on this about 30 days ago and with the aid of credit headers were able to develop names and addresses of numerous witnesses who were subpoenaed, and favorable to our point of view that the restaurant should not be held liable. Opposing counsel agreed to an out of court settlement that was favorable for both parties. Without these credit headers, we would never have been able to find these people. Once again this is where we needed DMV records and Credit Headers to work with but only the headers were available. Who benefited. Again, the Consumers!!! I could document numerous case results, but these tell the story.

Ray Smothers  
PACIFIC LEGAL INVESTIGATIONS INC.

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**INHERITANCE – HEIRS FOUND**

A retired police friend of mine came down with cancer and he has no close living relatives. He is ok right now but is living on borrowed time. His wife passed away about five years ago, she had some nephews in New Jersey.

He asked me to locate them. I did, I found them living in New Jersey. This was possible due to some names, (a bunch of similars) but eventually because of SSNs was able to locate them and was able to figure out who they were by their address history.

They will inherit my friend's estate. My friend is a recluse and could not be identified even if his CDL could be located, but since I knew him and am a notary I was also able to notarized some docs. for him, which lead to several other legal matters that had to be taken care of.

Valeria H. Washburn  
CENTRAL POINT INVESTIGATIONS

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**HABEAS CORPUS WITNESSES LOCATED**

I've been working on a habeas case for the past several years. We just finished a series of hearings. Throughout the proceedings, the Deputy AG's refused to turn over documents, or acknowledge their existence in many cases, in what was (at least in my -- and the petitioner's attorney's -- opinion,) in blatant violation of the CSC order.

Repeatedly we succeeded in getting the information and evidence out of them only after extensive investigation. We pretty much had to shame them into turning over some of this information. The information WAS there. But the State could not be trusted to turn it over. In many cases, we were able to extract information from them only after proving it existed. We did that by finding and interviewing former inmates. Social Security Numbers, and credit headers played central roles in finding these people.

By contrast, all the DAG's had to do to find people was to call up any number of law enforcement or parole agencies, and obtain instant location information.

Accomplishing the same thing took me weeks, or even months. Without credit headers, and therefore access to SSN's, these tasks would have been much more difficult, or absolutely impossible.

In this case, a man is on death row, which was convicted as a result of prosecutorial misconduct, and very likely even judicial misconduct. Without access to SSN and credit header information, none of this would have come to light.

Dave Wallace  
WALLACE INVESTIGATIVE SERVICES

**HELPING INVESTIGATE IDENTITY THEFT**

The "potential client" has been contacted by a social service agency to tell her that there is more than one name associated with her social security number. Of course ("for privacy reasons") they cannot/will not tell her the other name(s) in use, but do say that it appears to have originated from a fast-food restaurant in the San Diego area; she lives in Amador County. She is also informed that it appears this someone-else has filed tax returns using her number and has received tax refunds on them. She does not know if this means they are getting her refunds, or if they getting their own, thus she does not know if she is the victim of a theft.

Of course she calls the police. She doesn't know which fast food in San Diego, so it may be SDPD, or the sheriff, or whoever: no help there. Local Law Enforcement says since the thing originated in San Diego area, they have no means of dealing with it. "Thanks for calling."

I explained that there are things a PI can do to help, at least get enough of the data collection and other hard work done so the local police might be induced into doing something. Maybe I could find the name of the person, and get more specific information as to what crimes were actually happening. I also had to break the news to her that it would cost her money, and that there was little hope of getting anyone to reimburse her. (The "social service agency" reference and some of her other references to the events told me that she does not have a lot of discretionary income.

Legislation barring private investigator access to SSNs and the information keyed to them does not combat ID fraud; it only makes it harder to catch the people who commit the fraud.

**MICHAEL J. MARTIN**

**MICHAEL J. MARTIN INVESTIGATIONS**

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**GAS THIEVES IDENTIFIED AND ARRESTED**

Diesel Fuel Theft. A large corporation in Northern California asked us to help solve a fuel theft ring working in Calif and Oregon. The company credit cards were fraudently being used to access fuel from private fuel stations. We placed the private fuel service outlets under observation and were able to get the license number of the truck/tractors that were accessing the pumps and pumping the fuel. Since we do not have access to residential addresses from DMV our only other source was to identify these individuals from credit headers. We were able to acquire enough information and identify the people involved that the Sac County DA issued a grand theft warrant and they are at this time being arrested. Who benefited? Consumers of California.

Ray Smothers  
PACIFIC LEGAL INVESTIGATIONS INC.

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**FATHER AND DAUGHTER REUNITED**

I reunited a father and his 27-year-old daughter by using the social security number to find him. The daughter, who was from Bakersfield, had not seen her father for about 15 years. After doing a name search and matching a social security number with the name, I found him in Florida. I called and talked to him & asked him if he had a daughter named (omitted). He said he did but has not seen her in a long time and has no idea where she was. I told him that his daughter was looking for him and wanted him to call her. He started to cry with joy. I gave him her phone number per her request and after I advised her that I had found him in Florida, she also started to cry and thanked me very much. They were subsequently reunited. Without his social security number, he would have never been located because he had a common name.

**SERRANO INVESTIGATIVE SERVICES**  
Joseph M. Serrano

**IDENTITY THEFT EXPOSED AFTER WORKPLACE ASSAULT**

We had a case in which we were able to nail a master identity thief because we had access to a SSN Database. It is a 100% certainty that we would not have enjoyed that success without that access. Because of our efforts, this guy is in prison. Without our efforts he might still be running loose. Our SUBJECT was the office manager of a medium sized law firm here in Las Vegas. The guy was getting \$150M/year and a headhunter had been paid \$15M to recruit him. Both the headhunter and the partners in the law firm conducted "background investigations" on him before he was hired. He had been in that position for about four months when we were retained.

The case was triggered in a very unusual manner. This guy insulted a paralegal that was a long time favorite of a Senior Partner. The Senior Partner requested a workup on SUBJECT late Sunday night. By Friday noon of that same week we were able to furnish the FBI and Metro with enough information to enable them to come to the law office, hook him up, and haul him away. He was a two-time loser and a fugitive from California! He was a master identity thief and when arrested had a laptop full of birth certificates of victims and victims parents. He had already scammed a law firm in NM. His MO was to take over the entire office administration including the accounting department. From there he swung with fee payments received by the firm. As I say, without access to the SSN database, we would have missed it.

On an unrelated related matter, I recently had an individual in the salvage business call me to tell me that a former employee viciously assaulted him. He was hit repeatedly with brass knuckles and it was only the actions of some other workers in the area that saved his life. The assailant disappeared and his current whereabouts are unknown. The assailant worked for this company for more than a year. The only known derog was an unrecalled misdemeanor arrest in California a year or so ago.

I was given the assailant's SSN from his personnel file. I ran a couple of quick database searches using the SSN and reported that a ghost had assaulted him! The guy who beat him up a week earlier, died 10 years ago -- in 1994!

I was able to confirm the name, DOB and SSN through the Social Security Master Death Database. The assailant had indeed assumed a dead man's identity!

Obviously, a background investigation before this guy was hired would have kept this man from becoming the victim of an aggravated assault. In this case, it was negligence in failing to run a background investigation that almost led to his death.

Alan M. Kaplan, Director  
Attorneys' Investigative Consultant

**INDIGENT PREGNANT FEMALE ASSISTED BY BENEFACTOR**

Many years ago I was asked to locate a pregnant female who was in need of financial assistance by a person who was not interested in her sexually, but actually wanted to help.

I used most of my usual tools to find this subject here in Texas where most records are open and the Driving License database is also available to Licensed Investigators. I found that I was about one or two addresses behind. I ultimately used a "Credit header" service to find the address for this young lady and made contact with her to offer her assistance.

Funds were placed in a special account that I used to pay her OB-GYN medical doctor for services after my wife, a Registered Nurse, checked the bills for errors.

This case was very special to me as it was clearly a case where I had an opportunity to "do the right thing". I would like to have all the tools available to do this again should the need arise. I should note that more often than not the "Credit header" is used to develop leads for legal investigations where I am finding witnesses or attempting to serve legal process.

Please note that Texas laws do not allow me to reveal the names of clients or subjects with very rare exceptions. This is all the detail that I can provide. Further, in Texas, our Texas Department of Public Safety and the Federal Bureau of Investigation subject Licensed Investigators to frequent criminal history checks. Currently our licensing is handled by the Texas Department of Public Safety (our "State Troopers".)

William C. Asher  
Licensed Investigator and Security Consultant

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**KIDNAPPED SON LOCATED**

This example is from my own experience as a licensed private investigator attempting to assist a domestic maid whose son had been kidnapped by her husband. She had not seen her son in five years and had never contemplated hiring an investigator. What she did do was mount a letter writing campaign which yielded many letters from various empathetic police officials and politicians expressing their regret but providing no real answers or concrete assistance. She showed me a stack two inches thick of such letters, including one to the president of the United States, her Congressman, county sheriff, local municipal police chief, etc.

When she told me that in addition to having her husband's date of birth, she also had his social security number, I became optimistic. I entered the SSN into my TransUnion database and immediately learned that the husband had used a West Palm Beach address within the previous six months when applying for credit. I checked directory assistance and they confirmed that there was a non-published telephone number in his name at that address. A five-year journey of desperation, anguish and frustration was rewarded with success within a five-minute period by simply having access to header information in the form of an inexpensive database search. "

Brian P. McGuinness, Licensed Private Investigator  
McGuinness & Associates

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**LOCATE MISSING FATHER**

I was hired by a client in her mid 30's to locate her missing father. She had been looking for him for over 15 years without success. The last she heard he had undergone open-heart surgery, and she feared he was now living on the street. With his full name, DOB, and place of birth, I was able to obtain his SS#, and armed with that info was finally able to track him down. She tearfully thanked me for reuniting her with her father whom she thought she would never see again.

Ron Bowren, RRT, RCP  
MODESTO P.I.

## **EXAMPLES OF PRIVATE INVESTIGATORS USE OF SSNs**

### **LOCATING FAMILY REGARDING CONCERNS ABOUT CONSERVATOR**

My CPA called me for help regarding one of her clients. A little ole lady had been placed into Conservatorship. She has no known living family. Her husband and son are deceased. It appeared that the Conservator was bleeding money out of the account. My job was to locate relatives. Without the use of SSNs numbers, we would not have been able to use the SSNs of her husband and sons to locate additional family members. Although we are still working on this case, the task would be impossible without SSNs. It is ironic. There are no known requirements to be a Conservator. In California, an individual who desires to become a Conservator takes a \$1,000 course, gets a certificate, and gets on a court appointed list and are paid through the court. Conversely, Department of Consumer Affairs, Bureau of Investigative Services, regulates private investigators in California.

R. PAUL HIETALA, CPI,MPA  
THIN BLUE LINE INVESTIGATIONS

### **LAW ENFORCEMENT DIRECTS CITIZENS TO ENGRAVE PERSONAL PROPERTY WITH SSN**

For years, in the 70's, 80's, 90's, Law Enforcement and Elected People encouraged people to engrave their Ca Driver License Number and/or SS # on Personal Property. The idea being if stolen, Police could track the item back to the person charge the thief with 496. So, there are still Millions of items out there with the numbers engraved into them. These items are sold to others at garage sales, tossed out, traded in for new items and these were engraved. In Sacramento, you can go to the Public Library and check out an engraver.

R. PAUL HIETALA, CPI, MPA  
THIN BLUE LINE INVESTIGATIONS

**EXAMPLES OF PRIVATE INVESTIGATORS USE OF SSNs**

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**LOCATING WITNESSES – CRIMINAL & CIVIL**

I have been a Private Investigator for 25 years. On a regular basis I use Social Security Numbers to locate long lost witnesses in criminal defense cases as well as those involved in personal injury matters. This information is very important to differentiate one person from another when they have similar names. I also use SS #'s to locate women who may have married and changed their last name.

David B. Mac Dougall  
Information Services

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**LOCATING WITNESSES**

I use socials and credit headers every day to locate defendants in civil cases for service of process. Without it, the cost to serve hard to find defendants will dramatically increase.

**EMPLOYMENT BACKGROUNDS**

Also use SS# to identify prior address history for criminal background checks. Because there are no true statewide or national criminal record databases available to PI's, credit headers are necessary to identify locations where records should be searched. Restriction on SS# will lead to undesirables being hired. If SSNs were eliminated as an identifier, there would be no place to access the information even with a permissible purpose.

Ron L. Watkins, Jr.  
Watkins Investigations

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**WRONGFUL DEATH CLAIMANT LOCATED**

Recently had case where estranged father died in accident. Client (current wife) knew he had a daughter from prior girlfriend, but had no info. Other than the girl's mother's name. Using credit headers, I was able to identify and locate the mother & daughter to apprise them of the wrongful death claim.

Ron L. Watkins, Jr.  
Watkins Investigations

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**WITNESS PROVIDES EXONERATION**

Recently used SS# and credit headers to locate a witness to accident. The witness will testify that my client has no liability in the case and should not ever have been made a party.

Ron L. Watkins, Jr.  
Watkins Investigations

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**CONSUMERS AFFECTED**

Litigation expenses will rise sharply if credit headers are restricted. Double edge sword for our profession. Good for investigators in one sense because the cost to locate someone will double/triple. Bad for businesses, law firms, and the average person because now they can't afford a good, thorough investigation. Rather than pay the \$, they will skip it and cut corners, which leads to more litigation down the road. (Due to the criminal being hired because we didn't know where he lived, or the con artist who swindles the old lady because we couldn't verify identify and check him out).

Ron L. Watkins, Jr.  
Watkins Investigations

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**LOCATING WITNESSES**

I have used the Social Security index many times to locate hundreds of witnesses in criminal cases (10 to 30 per month). These are witnesses that would not have been available for trial and the results could have been catastrophic and innocent clients convicted. To lose the ability to locate, interview and subpoena witnesses for criminal, administrative and civil actions would affect the ability to realistically do an already difficult job.

I have also used the Social Security index to locate and identify suspects in fraud investigations.

Dan Goldsmith  
GOLDSMITH INVESTIGATIONS

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**MENTALLY ILL SISTER LOCATED**

A woman in Texas was referred to me. She was trying to find her sister who was mentally ill and was last known to reside in San Diego. She had her last known address but the sister had moved, leaving no forwarding address. I was able to do a couple of database searches, including credit header searches that disclosed her SSN and several additional addresses for her. Through these leads I determined she frequented a downtown YMCA under a fictitious name. From there, I was able to learn that she was living in a downtown residential hotel. When I made inquiry at the hotel, I learned that she had been acting "very strange" and was about to be evicted. It seems that she had stopped taking her medication, was anorexic and wandered aimlessly around town at night. As a result, the Texas sister was able to find the mentally unstable woman, get her admitted to a hospital and back on her medication. She subsequently took her home to Texas where she could ensure that she would take her medication and would be able to function in society.

ANTHONY W. PERRIN  
PERRIN INVESTIGATIVE SERVICE

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**MISSING NIECE BECOMES HEIRESS**

One case in particular involved my being assigned to locate a 32 year old, last seen at age 19. Had DOB but no SS. Objective was to find her as her aunt in Germany, who raised her and her sister, was dying and wanted to see her one last time. I inquired about being hospitalized and the sister recalled that she had a broken arm and was treated at Kaiser, possibly in Norwalk, but over 15 years ago.

Kaiser personnel assisted in locating her file by hand and located her SS number, which took about a week. I traced her to Wyoming. I was flown there and she had married, had a new name, moved, but I located her.

She wanted to 'leave things the way they were', but I advised I would return in the morning and we would have breakfast and talk. She had a 6-year-old girl no one knew about.

I got her to call her sister and there was a reunion before the aunt died. She inherited some money and rejoined the family she had not seen in 13 years. (One of my favorite cases).

**GENE A. CELLA, SR.**  
**JUSTICE INV. & POLYGRAPHS**

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**MOM & CHILDREN REUNITED**

Without breaking confidentiality, and wearing my other hat as a Court Appointed Special Advocate for Abused and Neglected Kids here in Colorado (AKA Guardian ad Litem's in California), I recently was assigned a case by the presiding judge whereby two kids were taken from their abusive dad, and his parental rights were terminated. The mother fled their abusive relationship, fearing murder by her spouse, leaving the kids, over 9 years prior.

The Department of Health Services had been unable to locate the birth mom, and the kids were about to be placed into the adoption pool. When I picked up the case, I ran the birth mom's SSN in one of my PI databases, and immediately located the mom.

She just moved here from out of state to be with her boys, and is working with the courts to regain custody. Kids AND mom are very happy they have been reunited.

Just another example of what will NOT happen if we lose the ability to track by SSN.

Michael S. Magill, CFE, CPP  
Magill & Associates

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**PRE-EMPLOYMENT FRAUD**

I use the SSN every time I conduct a pre-employment background check for my clients. For example, I have found that a person lists their current address on an application, but may have live there only a couple of months. Yet when you run their SSN, it tells you that they lived in another city or state the past several years. I then run an additional criminal check in the county of residence as shown on the SSN header. In doing this, I have discovered for my clients, an individual who was using six names and SSN's, an individual who moved to Laguna Beach from Texas, and who was on parole for sexual assault, and was being considered for a position as night supervisor for a group of young female employee. I could not do my client justice without the credit headers. I have discovered that on an average 3 out of 6 people have another name identified with their SSN, and I send them a letter advising them of that fact. Credit headers are critical to not only my business procedures, but to my clients, and their ability to hire an individual that has been thoroughly checked out.

Attached is a copy of the letter I send to the applicants who have other names on their SSN's.

Bill Smyth  
**WILLIAM D. SMYTH - SMYTH INVESTIGATIONS**

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**PROTECTING CHILDREN**

A concerned father of a 6-year-old girl hired me because each time she was returned to him from a court ordered visitation with the child's mother the daughter would exhibit unusually withdrawn behavior. After conducting surveillance on the client's wife I learned that she drove the 6-year-old daughter to a house where I observed 2 adult males and an adult female at the residence. After an hour the client's wife left her daughter at that residence and did not return for 4 hours. When I returned to the office I ran a credit header search for that address. The credit header gave me the SSN and date of birth for each subject, which I used to identify one of the males as a Georgia, registered sex offender. He had not supplied the sheriff with his new address. Using the SSN and DOB identifiers and name from the credit header I obtained a photograph from the sheriff's office and confirmed the identity of the male seen at the residence. I alerted the sheriff's sex offender squad and his probation was revoked. I also learned that one of the other males was a convicted felon. Through the use of the credit header information a probable sexual act against this minor and possibly others was averted. I would have never learned the identity of the subjects without access to the credit header information. It is essential that licensed private investigators have access to credit headers. We are an integral part of the justice system. This is just one of many examples of how the use of credit headers has protected society from sexual predators and other criminals.

Bob Poulnot  
Investigative Connections, Inc.

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**SEX OFFENDER STALKING PREVENTED**

Female client (37) tells me she is being stalked. Her husband died (40) leaving her with two little girls. She goes with her sister to Hawaii for two weeks to regroup and get her head together. In the hotel room she receives a call. "Remember me Sherry? I'm the guy that raped you 20 years ago. I still have the knife. I know your husband died. You'll see me again." Police think she is having posttraumatic hysterics and pay her no mind. She remembers the incident but at the time was young and too embarrassed to tell anyone. She had only the guy's first name (it had been at a college mixer). She knew the school he attended. With the first name and school I was able to do research in yearbooks. I found three people in the appropriate class with the same first name. One was in the next state, other two across the country. Developed SS # by public records data bases (actually via a bankruptcy). Used the SS# to locate the guy.

He turns out to now be a registered weapons dealer, specializing in multi-fire assault weapons. He is under suspicion of fraud for threatening 2 little old ladies in his community and taking their rare older weapons (family heirlooms). He had been keeping in touch with this woman via her college alumni web site. When he learned she was widowed he struck again. The info was turned over to the appropriate police department who admitted there was substance here. They put out surveillance and actually found the guy stalking the area. Did I prevent another rape or worse? Don't know, but I found him and wouldn't have without the use of SS# information.

Kitty Hailey

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**SIBLINGS FOUND – BIRTH FAMILY**

A woman in her late fifties, who was adopted, asked me to find her siblings. She was diagnosed with breast cancer and wanted to meet them. Using several different techniques, including running social security numbers for the siblings' latest address information, I was able to locate her eldest sister. When I spoke to the sister by phone, she started to cry. She had been trying to find her sister for years. She was so happy to hear that her sister was looking for her.

*Sylvia M. Palma*

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**SSN DECREPANCIES REPORTED**

Since I am bilingual speaking Spanish and English I receive many assignments to interview Spanish speaking clients and witnesses. If I need to locate the individual I use a social security trace. If I see someone is using the witness or client's social security number I advise the client or witness and tell him or her to report this to the social security administration and I give them the phone number. The clients and witnesses appreciate the information and take the appropriate steps to correct the fraud.

Deanne Acuna, CLI  
Acuna & Associates

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**STALKER EXPOSED**

My client's daughter was involved in an abusive-destructive relationship. We removed her and father spirited her out of state. She was lured back into the relationship and did not provide parents with her location. We located her again but only monitored the situation this time. Within a month or two, she was assaulted by her boyfriend and police were called. Her boyfriend assaulted the police. The daughter finally left him, and protective order was issued while the felony case against the boyfriend was open. A few months later we did a background investigation and credit header information showed that unbeknownst to the daughter, the abusive boyfriend had previously been living in the same apartment complex she had moved to, i.e., he was stalking her, in spite of the protective order. The family realized the daughter was still in danger and took appropriate action.

CHARLES PFISTER  
CHARLES PFISTER P.I.

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**IDENTITY THEFT SOLVED**

My Client was an auto dealer who discovered a car was purchased by a buyer using fraudulent identification (\$18,000 loss). We contacted the individual whose name and identifiers were on the fraudulent CA DL and were told that DMV had an open case based on the theft of his identity. We were subsequently provided with some information by DMV and referred to a local P.D. with an associated investigation. The police investigator matched a copy of the fraudulent i.d. used with a gang-related case he was working on. He provided the real identity of the buyer. We located this individual, but based on information provided by the police investigator and subsequent background investigation, we determined due to low probability of recovering the loss, it was probably not worth the risk for the Client to proceed against the individual to recover the loss in civil court. Credit header information was used for various locates and background checks. Client could have simply referred the matter to local police, but we provided an answer concerning their loss within a couple weeks; whereas, the police case would have been open for months or years with the loss of the Client only a minor factor in a complex multi-jurisdictional criminal investigation.

CHARLES PFISTER  
CHARLES PFISTER P.I.

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**MILITARY FRAUD**

The Armed Forces Mutual Insurance Companies retained me to find a Marine Sergeant that faked his own drowning for several million dollars. He changed his name several times, using different Social Security numbers. His "widow" was his accomplice, and was sending him money through a company they started in a different city. Navy Investigations and the FBI were searching for him also. When I figured out that a set of numbers they were using on invoices were really his SSN. I was able to use the SSN numbers to locate his new names and address. I was on the TV program "Current Affairs", where I explained how I found him. He is in federal prison.

James Aiello, LL.B.  
CORPORATE INTELLIGENCE SERVICES

**TERMINALY ILL FOSTER DAUGHTER  
REAL FATHER "WILLIAM SMITH" FOUND BY FAMILY**

The former foster parents of a young lady with a very serious, possibly terminal illness contacted me when their former foster daughter was in the hospital. She never knew her natural father, as she had been placed for adoption at birth. Her mother had passed away in the late 1980's. Her maternal grandmother refused to give her any information about her natural father. The only thing she knew was his name, William Smith, and that he had lived in the Santa Clarita valley when he was in his late teens.

When I took this case, I was not very optimistic, and I cautioned the former foster parents that it might prove to be an overwhelming and cost prohibitive assignment. Well, thank God for credit headers! With that resource, and some luck or Divine intervention, I was able to locate her birth father in 3 days.

William Smith was absolutely thrilled that I found him. He said that the maternal grandmother would never give him any information about his daughter. He wondered about her for years, but did not have the resources to locate her. Father and daughter were happily reunited, and she recovered from her illness.

Without credit headers, this would simply have never happened. This story still gives me goose bumps.

I have done many pro bono cases in my career. There are many other families that I have reunited over the years. They do not always have a happy ending like this one, as sometimes birth parents or children just do not wish to be found. I do caution clients in writing, in advance that, if the person they wish me to find does not want to be reunited, then I cannot ethically give their contact information to them.

There are many other important uses for credit headers in my day-to-day investigations. I use this resource more than any other to locate witnesses, defendants, deadbeat dads, skips, and to find perpetrators of crimes. Without credit headers, the cost of investigations will easily double or triple, or just simply not be possible.

I pray that our legislators will realize that there is an absolute need for this resource by private investigators that have a permissible purpose for accessing this data.

Jim Zimmer, CPI  
BENCHMARK INVESTIGATIONS

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**TWO FRAUD VICTIMS ASSISTED**

Last week I was conducting a fraud investigation - a client had been provided with \$58,000 in worthless business checks. We learned from the bank that the checks were stolen from a seemingly once legitimate business that is now defunct. I had to locate the former owner of the defunct business to determine where and when the checks were stolen as this might provide leads as to who perpetrated the fraud on my client. By using credit headers, I was easily able to locate the current address of the business owner so that he could be contacted and my investigation continues. Without credit headers, locating the business owner would have been very difficult, maybe impossible, and certainly at a great expense to my client.

Robert Scott  
INTER-AGENCY INVESTIGATIONS INC.

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**VETERAN LOCATED**

When I was in the Marine Corps from 1965-1971, we were assigned "service numbers." Mine was 2119094. That is a number that is not associated with any other member of the Marine Corps and tells you that I was literally the 2,119,094th person to ever enlist in the Corps. That is a very small in the military history of the United States, but that is another story.

In about 1967-68, Marines began to be assigned as their PRIMARY IDENTIFIER their SSN. The Marine Corps was the LAST BRANCH of the military to accept the SSN as an identifier.

Since the late '80's, the SSN has become a crucial number when attempting to locate ANY prior service member of the finest military organization that has ever served the American people or any standing army in the world.

It is a CRUCIAL number when dealing with important matters dealing with veterans of the US armed forces.

Approximately two years ago, I was requested by a retired (20 years) US Army Lt. Colonel to locate a comrade in arms that he had served with in Hue City, South Viet Nam during the Tet Offensive of 1968. Arguably, the mostly intense battle of that war. He had served with a counter-part/peer who was a Marine.

Using the technology of the *ChoicePoint Online* system, I located the individual very quickly and facilitated the reunion of two valiant warriors who had become disconnected by time.

There was nothing inappropriate about this effort. It is very important to recognize that it was OUR GOVERNMENT who chose to utilize this number as a permanent identifier and that without access to the SSN Credit Header information, these two valiant, decorated warriors might NEVER have been reunited.

Semper Fi!

Riley Parker, CPI  
Parker & Associates Professional Investigations

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**VETERANS LOCATED**

Besides my "regular jobs" (P.I., Court Appointed Special Advocate ((CASA)) for Abused and Neglected Kids), I also serve as one of our "searchers" for our Air Force Security Service Vietnam Veterans group. I use databases that include SSNs, and have been able to happily reunite over 100 members over the past two years!

Even after all these years, we all get pretty teary-eyed during our get togethers, and share the good times and bad times we had during our Viet Nam service.

Michael S. Magill, CFE, CPP  
Magill & Associates

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**VICTIM OF CRIME EXPOSED AS IDENTITY THEFT FRAUDSTER**

We are currently performing criminal defense investigative work for an individual charged with attempted murder and burglary. The "victim" in this case seemed to be a law-abiding citizen, minding his own business, when he returned early to his residence and found our client in his residence. Upon beginning our background check of this victim, we found his personal history only went back to 1997. We then performed a check using his SSN and uncovered an alias name. When the DA was confronted with this information he insisted the victim was also a victim of identity fraud. The attorney for our client then obtained the DMV photo from the alias name and it sure enough turned out to match the victim. Running a background check on this alias name, we then find the "innocent victim" is a convicted drug dealer, illegal alien, spousal abuser, with several failures to appear in various jurisdictions. He had assumed a new name and DOB in 1997. Our client's version of what occurred, that is was a drug deal gone bad and that he acted in self-defense, is now much more credible, thanks to our ability to check SSN. The final result of this information in his case has yet to be played out but his first trial resulted in a hung jury and would have surely been a conviction otherwise.

James Filomeo  
Filomeo Investigative Services

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**VIOLENCE AVERTED**

Violence assessor James Cawood uses the SSN header information for almost every case he evaluates where an in-depth violence assessment is needed in order to keep people safe in the workplace. Since past behavior has been shown to be a strong indicator of future behavior, it is essential to research the backgrounds of many of these individuals. Without the SSN header information we would not be able to determine where to look. One case in particular will illustrate this.

We had been asked to conduct a violence assessment for an individual at a client facility in Iowa. He had exhibited threatening behavior. The entire shift was worried about their safety. Before conducting the on-site interview with the subject, we ran a trace of his SSN, which located header information for counties in Tennessee, along with another name associated with the subject. Review of court documents in Tennessee located an extensive violent criminal history for this subject, under his prior name, along with other information, which indicated that he most likely was also a psychopath. Armed with this information, we were able to provide a strategic method for dealing with this individual that would be the most effective in this situation. A safe resolution was obtained, which would not have been possible without the ability to identify where the subject had been living prior to his employment and under what name he had been using.

It is important to understand that the company involved us rather than law enforcement because of the concerns that law enforcement did not have the expertise and the resources to provide continued support at the facility indefinitely. This is especially true in a post 911 world where private security and investigators are being asked to provide expanded services to protect businesses and individuals while law enforcement resources are applied in other areas.

**ANNE CAWOOD - CAWOOD RESEARCH**

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**RE: JAMES S. CAWOOD, CPI,CSP - FACTOR ONE INC.**

**WITNESSES FOR MISSING WOMAN LOCATED THROUGH SSN**

In 1986, I was contacted by a woman whose sister, Dottie Caylor, disappeared the previous year. My business associate, Randy Ontiveros, and I agreed to take on the case though no funds were available to even cover expenses. There was considerable evidence of foul play, but the case was never thoroughly investigated. Even though two years after Dottie's disappearance, the case was featured on Unsolved Mysteries and new leads were developed, the case went nowhere. I continued to work on the case through the years. This year, due to the pluckiness of a local investigative reporter (see attached series of articles), the cold case was reopened by the responsible law enforcement agency. I am fortunate that this agency is allowing me to continue to be actively involved in the investigation. Joining with me now is another private investigator, Notty Bumbo, who is also working for free.

Together we are assisting law enforcement with tracking down witnesses across the country, from Alaska to Indiana. We hope to finally resolve what happened to Dottie for the family. Dottie's father is deceased, her mother is now 90 years old and her sister, Diane, is 66. Time is running out.

The only identifier that works in a situation like this is the use of a social security number. This case has now spanned 19 years. Many people have moved several times and often to states other than California. We could not even hope to contact the majority of them without having access to databases though using the social security number as an identifier.

FRANCIE KOEHLER, CPI  
SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

**WRONGFULLY CONVICTED MAN RELEASED – WITNESSES RECANT**

A feature article in the New York Times Magazine chronicles the story of who was wrongfully accused of child molestation and who spent 19 years in prison. His name is John Stoll. He was recently released after a finding of factual innocence in Bakersfield, CA.

I am a California Private Investigator and work pro bono for the Northern California Innocence Project working in conjunction with Santa Clara University in San Jose, CA. My assignment was to find two brothers, now in their late twenties, who testified in the trial at ages six and eight. Through the use of credit headers and social security number, I found both of them, one in Oregon and one in North Dakota. Both men knew the truth and reported that they had been troubled this many years by their lies that sent a man to prison.

All of the 17 counts for which John Stoll was convicted were vacated after the testimony of the two brothers and others who are reported to have been pressured by those investigating the allegations. John Stoll is a free man.

Without the use of the social security numbers and credit headers, an innocent man would still be in prison, and a number of young men involved in this case would continue to live with their nightmare.

SHEILA J. KLOPPER  
KLOPPER INVESTIGATIONS